REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed October 19, 2004, the Examiner noted that claims 1-9 were pending, objected to claims 3 and 4 and rejected claims 1, 2 and 5-9. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 7-9 have been amended and, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 1-9 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections and objections are traversed below.

The Examiner has objected to the specification abstract which has been amended in consideration of the Examiner's comments. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

In the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. section 112 paragraph 2 as indefinite. The claims have has been amended in consideration of the Examiner's comments and it is submitted they satisfy the requirements of the statute. If additional concerns with the claims arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone to resolve the same. Suggestions by the Examiner are also welcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

In the Office Action the Examiner objected to claims 3 and 4 and indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. These claims have been so rewritten and it is submitted that these claims have not been narrowed and have the same scope as prior to being made independent and are now allowable. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Pages 2 and 4 of the Office Action reject claims 1, 2, 5-7, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Zhu and Due or over Zhu, Due and Seeger.

Zhu discusses removing background noise in a binary image. Due also discusses removing background noise. Both Zhu and Due employ a threshold to perform noise removal. Seeger discusses implementation of thresholding using a computer program.

In contrast, the present invention (see claims 1 and 7-9) is designed to produce a background noise free binary image by creating two different images of the original image where one image includes an "indistinct" line pattern and one image includes the line pattern and "noise" in a background area. These two images are combined with an "AND operation". This eliminates the noise. Typically, an AND operation, such as in the present invention, is more efficient than a thresholding comparison operation as in the prior art.

It is submitted that the invention of the independent claims distinguishes over the prior art and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

It is submitted that the claims satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112. It is also submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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